

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01046 281527Z

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TAGS: ECA

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATIONS BEARING ON U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ECA

1. EMBASSY WISHES TO OFFER THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH WASHINGTON REVIEW OF US ASSISTANCE TO ECA.

2. THE BASIC JUSTIFICATION FOR PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ECA IS THE CONTRIBUTION IT MAKES TO MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING OUR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH AND INFLUENCE KEY STAFF OF THAT ORGANIZATION SUCH AS THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DIVISION CHIEFS AND OTHER INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS, TO MOVE IN DIRECTIONS WE CONSIDER TO BE DESIRABLE. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WILL NOT, OF COURSE, ENSURE THAT ECA WILL SUPPORT POSITIONS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS WHICH WE ENDORSE. IT SHOULD, HOWEVER, HELP REINFORCE TENDENCIES WITHIN ECA WHICH ARE FAVORABLE TO OUR POSITIONS. THUS FAR, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DR. ADEDEJI, ECA SEEMS TO US TO BE DOING RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC ANALYSES OF THE PROBLEMS FACING AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP THEIR ECONOMIES AND PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM(S). GENERALLY SPEAKING, ECA IS A VOICE OF REASON AND MODERATION WITHIN THE THIRD WORLD AND IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. IT SHOULD ALSO BE RECOGNIZED THAT NO OTHER AFRICA-WIDE ORGANIZATION HAS THE CAPACITY (OR THE POTENTIAL) TO EQUAL ECA'S CONTRIBUTION IN ASSESSING THESE ECONOMIC ISSUES. ECA

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 01046 281527Z

ALSO PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE AS AN ADVISOR TO AFRICAN

COUNTRIES WHICH PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC MATTERS. AS LONG AS IT CONTINUES TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE, SENSIBLE ANALYSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, ITS ABILITY TO DO SO SHOULD BE ENHANCED.

3. ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS ECA'S ABILITY TO MAKE A DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES, SUB-REGIONS AND THE AFRICAN REGION AS A WHOLE. ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT ECA HAS NOT BEEN ESPECIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN THIS REGARD IN THE PAST, WE HOPE THAT UNDER ADEDEJI'S LEADERSHIP ECA WILL GAIN THE COMPETENCE IT REQUIRES TO MAKE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA. AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THIS CONNECTION IS THE DECLARED INTENTION OF UNDP TO SUPPORT ECA IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO UPGRADE ITS CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT ACTION (AS OPPOSED TO RESEARCH) PROJECTS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUB-REGIONS AS WELL AS THE WHOLE REGION.

4. IN ASSESSING THE TYPES OF ASSISTANCE TO EXTEND TO ECA, A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE APPROPRIATE BUT ONLY IF THE DIVISION OR ACTIVITY TO BE SUPPORTED HAS ALREADY FILLED ALL OF ITS UN POSITIONS WITH REASONABLY COMPETENT PEOPLE SO THAT OUR ASSISTANCE IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ALREADY FUNDED UN POSITIONS. WE WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE SENSITIVE TO PRESSURES FOR FURTHER AFRICANIZATION OF ECA'S STAFF. ADEDEJI'S ATTITUDE ON THIS ISSUE IS STILL UNCLEAR ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT MADE IT A MAJOR ISSUE SO FAR. IN ADDITION, ECA SHOULD HAVE THE TECHNICAL COMPETENCE TO MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF OUR US EXPERTS SO THAT THEIR CONTRIBUTION WILL BE WORTHWHILE. THIS HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, NOT ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST. IN VIEW OF THE COST OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AS MEASURED IN TERMS OF OUR LIMITED RESOURCE INPUT, WE SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL IN USING THIS ASSISTANCE TOOL.

5. TRAINING PROGRAMS ALSO SEEM TO BE APPROPRIATE. SHORT TERM STAFF TRAINING COULD BE OF REAL BENEFIT TO MIDDLE-LEVEL AND SENIOR ECA STAFF. CERTAIN TYPES OF SEMINARS WHICH INTRODUCE INNOVATIVE (AT LEAST TO AFRICA) CONCEPTS AND PROGRAMS MAY HAVE A HIGH PAYOFF. ON THE OTHER HAND, LONG TERM TRAINING FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 01046 281527Z

JUNIOR STAFF (MA/PHD) IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE OWING TO ITS COST, THE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE INDIVIDUALS TRAINED WILL NOT STAY WITH ECA, AND THE EXTENSIVE BILATERAL PROGRAMS OF THIS TYPE WHICH WE ALREADY SUPPORT IN AFRICA. NOR WOULD TRAINING OF INTERPRETERS SEEM APPROPRIATE AS THIS FUNCTION IS A CORE SKILL WHICH THE UN SYSTEM SHOULD FINANCE ITSELF. OUR TRAINING FOR ECA SHOULD BE DIRECTED AT HIGH IMPACT, LOW COST ACTIVITIES.

6. WE MAY WISH TO OFFER PROGRAM SUPPORT TO CERTAIN ECA ACTIVITIES AS WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST WITH THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM. THIS IS AN APPEALING TECHNIQUE AS IT PROVIDES DISCRETION TO ECA STAFF WHO, ASSUMING A REASONABLE DEGREE OF COMPETENCE, SHOULD BE IN THE BEST POSITION TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES FOR THE PROGRAMS SUPPORTED. THE KEY HERE IS TO SUPPORT ONLY THOSE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS WHICH HAVE BEEN WELL THOUGHT OUT, ARE IN LINE WITH AID PRIORITIES AND HAVE REASONABLE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS.

7. TO SUM UP, THE EMBASSY SUPPORTS A CONTINUED PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE TO ECA BECAUSE ECA UNDER ADEDEJI'S LEADERSHIP SHOWS REAL PROMISE OF DEVELOPING INTO AN EFFECTIVE, MODERATE INSTITUTION CAPABLE OF TREATING AFRICAN ECONOMIC ISSUES RESPONSIBLY AND OF MAKING CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS TO AFRICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AS LONG AS THIS IS THE CASE, IT IS CLEARLY IN THE US INTEREST TO SUPPORT, ALBEIT MODESTLY, ADEDEJI'S EFFORTS AND THE EFFORTS OF THE ECA STAFF.

8. FRANK PINDER HAS SEEN AND CONCURS WITH THIS MESSAGE.
TIENKEN

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